

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for conducting purchase transactions between a buyer and a
2 set of suppliers through a portal over the Internet, the method comprising:
3 performing a web search for suppliers of a product or service through the
4 portal;
5 displaying, through the portal, a list of matching suppliers located in the web
6 search;
7 displaying, through the portal, web sites of suppliers selected by the buyer
8 from the list of matching suppliers;
9 providing, through the portal, a structured form that allows the buyer to enter
10 data from the web sites of the selected suppliers;
11 providing, through the portal, structured forms that allow the selected
12 suppliers to enter data; and
13 storing the data entered into the structured forms by the buyer and the selected
14 suppliers in the database.

1 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the structured forms allow the selected
2 suppliers to change the data entered by the buyer.

1 3. The method of claim 2 further comprising:
2 transmitting notification messages to the selected suppliers;
3 displaying the data entered by the buyer to the selected suppliers;
4 displaying the data entered by the selected suppliers to the buyer;
5 displaying a structured form that allows the buyer to enter data in response to
6 the data entered by one of the selected suppliers; and
7 storing the data entered by the buyer in response to the data entered by the one
8 selected supplier in the database.

1 4. The method of claim 1 further comprising:
2 generating a report by analyzing the data stored in the database; and
3 displaying the report to the buyer.

1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the data entered by the buyer includes
2 a request for a price quote, and the data entered by the selected suppliers includes a response
3 to the request for the price quote.

1 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the data entered by the buyer includes
2 a purchase order.

1 7. The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers
2 further comprises:
3 searching through a private community of suppliers selected by the buyer.

1 8. The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers
2 further comprises:
3 searching a directory of suppliers that have been pre-qualified.

1 9. The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers
2 further comprises:
3 conducting an open search of the Internet using the Internet portal to locate a
4 supplier that matches the search criteria.

1 10. The method of claim 1 wherein performing the search for suppliers
2 further comprises:
3 searching through the Internet using search criteria that has been pre-selected
4 to locate suppliers within a specific industry.

1 11. A computer program product for conducting purchase transactions
2 between a buyer and suppliers through an Internet portal, the computer program product
3 comprising:

4 code for performing a web search for suppliers using search criteria;
5 code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a list of suppliers located
6 during the web search that match the search criteria;

7 code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a web site of a supplier
8 selected by the buyer from the list of suppliers;

9 code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a structured form that allows
10 the buyer to enter data displayed on the web site of the selected supplier;

11 code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a structured form that allows
12 the selected supplier to enter data in response to data entered by the buyer;

13 code for storing the data entered by the buyer and the selected supplier in a
14 database; and

15 a computer readable medium for storing the codes.

1 12. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code
2 for displaying the web site of the selected supplier simultaneously displays the web site with
3 the structured form on a display screen to the buyer.

1 13. The computer program product according to claim 11 further
2 comprising:
3 code for transmitting notification messages to the selected supplier;
4 code for displaying the data entered by the buyer to the selected supplier; and
5 code for displaying the data entered by the selected supplier to the buyer.

1 14. The computer program product according to claim 13 further
2 comprising:
3 code for displaying, through the Internet portal, a structured form that allows
4 the buyer to enter data responsive to the data entered by the selected supplier;
5 code for storing the data entered by the buyer in the database; and
6 code for displaying the data entered by the buyer to the selected supplier.

1 15. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the
2 structured form allows the selected supplier to enter price data, which is stored in the
3 database; and
4 the computer program product further comprises code for generating a report
5 based on the price data entered by a plurality of suppliers.

1 16. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code
2 for performing the search for suppliers using the search criteria further comprises code for
3 performing a structured search through a private community of suppliers selected by the
4 buyer.

1 17. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code
2 for performing the search for suppliers using the search criteria further comprises searching a
3 directory of pre-qualified suppliers.

1 18. The computer program product according to claim 11 wherein the code
2 for performing the search for suppliers using the search criteria further comprises conducting
3 an unstructured search of the Internet using the search criteria.

1 19. The computer program product according to claim 11 further
2 comprising:
3 code for transmitting a purchase order from the buyer to an MRP system of the
4 selected supplier; and
5 code for transmitting a delivery date and a price from the selected supplier's
6 MRP system to an MRP system of the buyer.

1 20. The computer program product according to claim 11 further
2 comprising:
3 code for displaying a buyer's request for a price quote to the selected supplier;
4 and
5 code for displaying a price entered by the selected supplier into the structured
6 form to the buyer.